



# SPARK GAP

Vol. 33, Issue 12, December 2016 *MARC - Serving Central Indiana Communities for thirty-three years*

## Season's Greetings!

A New Year is right around the corner. 2016 has been a busy year for MARC and hopefully 2017 will be just as busy and productive. I would like to thank everyone for all they have done for the club in 2016. Together, we have accomplished a lot.

Saturday, Dec. 17th at 8:00 a.m., we will have our annual Christmas pitch breakfast and club meeting. We will also be having a white elephant gift exchange. For your viewing pleasure we will also get a chance to see the premier of the MARC year-in-review video from Parker Productions. We hope that you will be able to join us.

Just a reminder that Dec. 31st marks the end of our membership year. It is time for all of us to renew our dues and support our club. At \$18 per year, a MARC membership is one of the best deals around. Please see Marlys Barr, KC9BHM, about getting dues current for 2017.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and safe New Year!! May your holiday season be filled with the joy of family, friends, rest, relaxation, and peace. May good health and prosperity be yours in 2017.

Jacki KI6QOG  
President



**MERRY CHRISTMAS &  
HAPPY NEW YEAR**



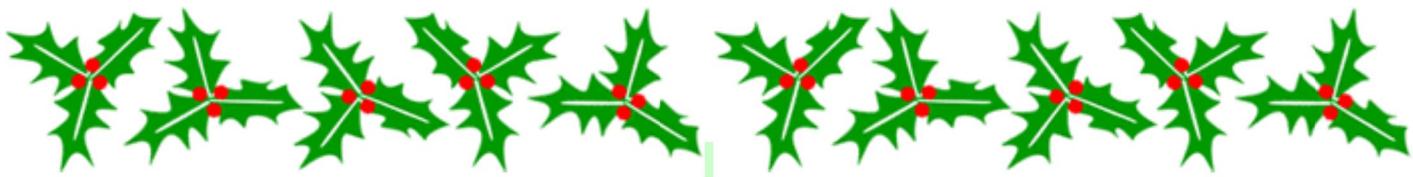
*Birthdays for the month of December:*

*KQ9Y-Chris Frederick*

*AE9H-Phil Melick*

*KC9YIA-Chris Rose*

*N9LLP-Rusty Kirts*



A few more contacts before we head out on Christmas Eve.

National Parks on the Air  
“A Very Special Event”  
by Bruce K9ICP

In case you didn’t already know, ARRL and the US National Park Service agreed to offer the ham radio community a year-long special event during 2016 commemorating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National Park Service.

Approximately 489 sites that are managed by the National Park Service were eligible to be activated by hams during the year. These included national parks, national recreation areas, historical memorials, historical monuments, historical battle fields, military parks, historical trails, national preserves, national rivers/seashores and affiliated areas.

Beginning January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016 hams could either activate a site by setting up a portable operation at one or more of the many sites or chase sites that were being activated by making contact. A contact involved the normal brief QSO that included an exchange of call signs, signal report, and either a park designator (activator) or state (chasers). The QSO information was all confirmed through Log Book of the World (LOTW).

Unfortunately, I never was able to arrange time during the year to activate a site (Indiana had three: Indiana Dunes Lake Shore, George Rogers Clark Historical Park, Abraham Lincoln Boyhood Home Memorial). However, I did work very hard all year long to chase sites that were being activated. While some sites were frequently activated during the year, others were only occasionally and nearly 30-35 were never activated.

Frequently, activators were using portable equipment at sites including battery or solar power and a variety of quickly assembled antennas. Most stations were operating significantly less than 100 watts output to conserve energy and for efficiency. In order for activators to get credit for their site visit, they needed to obtain at least 10 contacts at a site. This could be done via SSB, CW, or other digital mode on any of the permitted bands.

Needless to say chasing was frequently a challenge (like WAS, DXCC, etc.), but it’s been a lot of fun. I also learned a lot about the many parks and historical sites via the ARRL web link to each of the sites. I was very happy to have been able to connect with over 400 of the sites during the year. However, overall the event was extremely successful for all participating. It is hoped that over 1 million QSO will have been made by year end via this event.

There is still time to make a NPOTA contact at one of the qualifying sites before the end of the year. Don’t miss this fun event that could also earn you one of the special activator QSL cards commemorating your site contact.



Bruce – K9ICP on the air



Bruce – K9ICP with his grandson

*Pictures by Jack W8ISH*

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Dear Fellow Amateur Radio Operator,

Your help is needed to seek the passage of the Amateur Radio Parity Act which is still under consideration in the US Senate. Our time is very short to get this bill passed this session.

The Parity Act will provide important protection for amateur radio installations in housing that is covered by CC&R's (covenants, conditions and restrictions). CC&R's are present in the purchase contract of most new housing starts in new subdivisions. Although PRB-1 provides an amateur the protection of a reasonable accommodation for the installation of antennas by government actors such as zoning boards, the existence of a CC&R in a land contract can preclude the installation of amateur antennas, even on a larger lot !

Since this Congress is in the final post-election session I am asking for your help in promoting the passage of the Amateur Radio Parity Act. Even if you have already sent a message to your Senators, please send another message seeking their support for the passage of the Amateur Radio Parity Act. If you have time to pen a personalized message please do so - if you only have a few minutes to spare please follow the simple instructions on this link to send a message -

<https://arrl.rallycongress.net/ctas/urge-senate-to-support-amateur-radio-parity-act>

The process to follow the instructions on the link will take less than a minute and your message will help ensure that your interest to support the Amateur Radio Parity Act will be presented to our Senators in time to help make a difference.

I am aware that some of the responses and messages from our Senators have unfortunately been less than promising and concise, but that is even more of a reason to present your interests to see the passage of the Amateur Radio Parity Act.

Please write today !

## Greg Walden, W7EQI, to Chair Powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee

US Rep. Greg Walden, W7EQI (R-OR), who has championed the Amateur Radio Parity Act ([H.R. 1301](#)) as the chair of the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, will chair the US House Energy and Commerce Committee when the 115th Congress convenes in January. Energy and Commerce is considered one of the most powerful congressional panels on Capitol Hill.



**US Rep. Greg Walden,  
W7EQI.**

Walden defeated the more senior Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) and Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX) to succeed Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), who is stepping down from the chairmanship because of term limits. Members of the House GOP Steering Committee elected Walden on December 1 in a closed-door meeting.

Walden, who represents Oregon's 2nd congressional district, gained favor within the Republican Party after serving two terms as head of the National Republican Congressional Committee. The nine-term Oregon lawmaker had campaigned around the country with House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) during the run-up to the November election, and Walden's selection to head Energy and Commerce over a more senior colleague is being considered recognition of his role in the GOP's election successes.

During a Capitol Hill hearing last January, Walden, a cosponsor of H.R. 1301, called the measure "a commonsense bill" and urged his colleagues to support reporting the bill favorably to the full committee. In July, Walden had recommended the amended version of the bill to his colleagues as "a good balance." The Amateur Radio Parity Act bill has been awaiting action in the US Senate.

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## Elves at OF9X Bring the Spirit of Christmas to Ham Radio

As in past years, Santa Claus will be spreading the spirit of Christmas via Amateur Radio, but this year the elves are taking over the show. Twelve elves are operating OF9X ("Old-Father-Nine-Christmas") for the entire month of December, each with a 3-letter identification. Radio amateurs can work OF9X on all bands and modes, from 630 meters (where authorized) to 70 centimeters. Each contact is worth 1 point for stations in Europe and 2 points for stations outside Europe. The elves provide the multiplier -- up to 12 -- to determine your final score. Only contacts made in 2016 are valid. [Logs](#) are available on ClubLog, and the log will indicate which elf was worked, in case you miss the ID.



**Certified reindeer driver and  
Laplander Pertti "Pete" Koivula,  
OH2BEE/OH9U, is giving Santa a  
face and voice this year. Koivula is a  
well-known Finnish actor.**

The elves on the air and their 3-letter IDs are Arto, OH2KW (ART); Arttu, OH2FB (ATU); Jyri, OH2KM (JYR); Martti, OH2BH (MAR); Niko, OH2GEK (NIK); Pauli, OH5BQ (PAU); Pekka, OH2TA (PEK); Pertti, OH2BEE (PER); Raimo, OH2BCI (RAI); Tom, OH6VDA (TOM); Pertti, OH2PM (SIM), and Erik, OH2LAK (LAK).

Three awards are available: SKC Award (Santa is King of Christmas) -- at least 50 points; WMC Award (Warm and Memorable Christmas) -- at least 35 points, and RNS Award (Remember those Red Nose Elves) -- at least 20 points.

E-mail your log and your point calculation by January 5, 2017. Full-color award certificates will be sent via return mail. Include the name to be printed on the award and your e-mail address.

High-scoring operators and their children on each continent will be offered an opportunity to speak with Santa during Christmas week. Details will be available on the OF9X QRZ.com profile page.

..... ARRL NEWS December 2016

# Is there a market for a \$400 “prepper” radio?

By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

A couple of days ago, a reader wrote:

"I would like to know if it would be feasible to build a radio with the following features:

- \* SSB operation (only SSB is required, CW would be an additional benefit)
- \* 20 – 50W of power
- \* Portable-friendly (lightweight, capable of operating at lower voltages from small portable batteries)
- \* Low receiver current drain
- \* Coverage of 40m and 80m bands. Very limited coverage is acceptable. Even channelized coverage of a few select frequencies would be acceptable.
- \* S-meter

"It strikes me that there is a large market for ham radio products for “preppers,” and there has been a lot of interest in the Baofeng line of radios from that market. I think there would be a LOT of interest in a radio that could go far beyond line-of-sight and contact friends or family hundreds of miles away. Preppers would have little interest in contacts more than a state or two away, and no interest at all in novel operating modes. I wonder if a radio that trims away excess features (all-mode operation, wide frequency coverage, high power output, sophisticated audio filtering) could be produced for a lot less cost than currently available HF rigs. If so, and it was paired with a decent NVIS dipole and some General-class study materials and sold as a package deal, it could be a huge hit – Something you could tuck in a bug-out-bag, set up in the field, and use to make contacts in a reasonably local area, or set up in your backyard at home and use minimal power to operate.

"Is there a reason why I don't see radios like this on the market, some kind of technological limitation that would make this sort of thing impractical? If something like this was built, what kind of cost and performance would you expect? I'm certainly not expecting any kind of detailed analysis, but even just a speculation about if such a project could be feasible would be appreciated."

I replied:

"I think one of the reasons you don't see radios with the feature set you describe is that more full-featured radios are already pretty inexpensive. The Yaesu FT-450D, for example, costs less than \$800 and offers 100W output. The FT-817ND, which is designed for portable operation, costs less than \$700. Is that too much for preppers?"

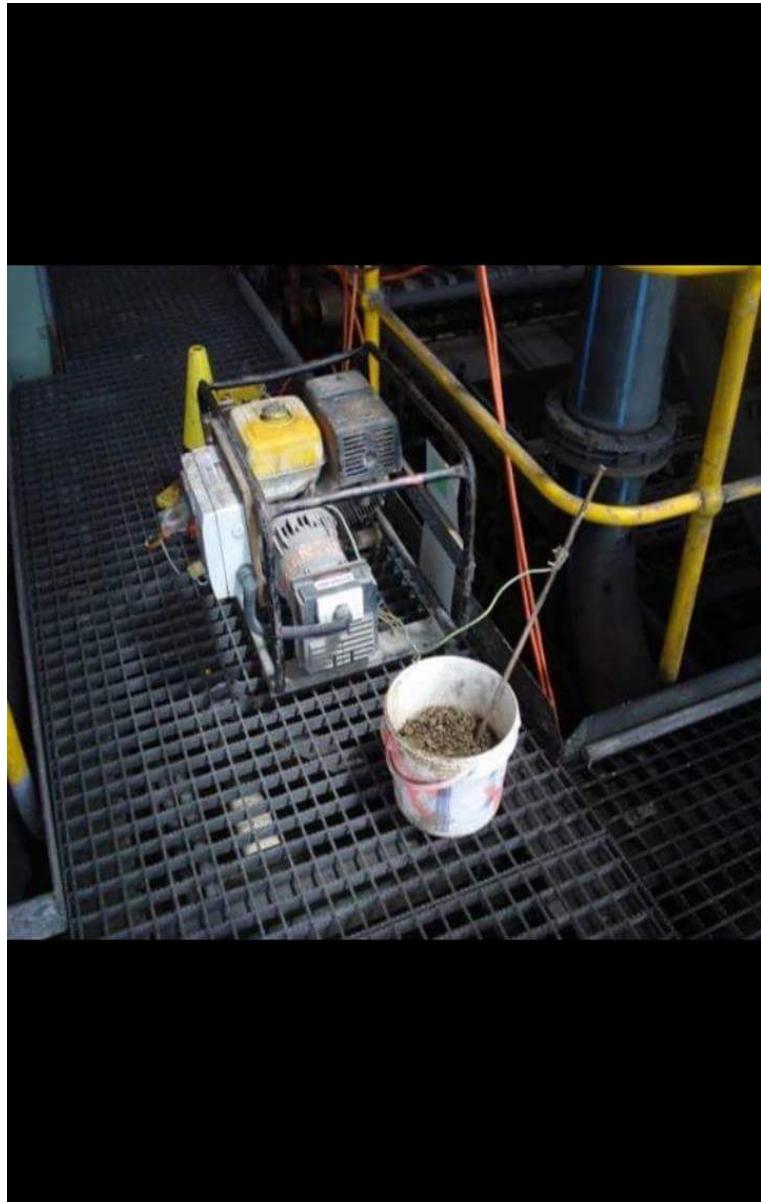
"While it might seem like you could sell a radio with fewer features for less, I think that you hit the law of diminishing returns. At some point, removing features, doesn't reduce the cost all that much. For example, removing the CW capabilities from a transceiver capable of SSB operation really doesn't save that much because in a way CW operation is really just a subset of SSB operation. You'll save the cost of a key jack, but how much is that? Maybe a buck or two. Having said that, it could be that the big amateur radio manufacturers are overlooking an opportunity here."

We swapped a couple more e-mails about this. He noted, "Most preppers would probably rather buy a high-end AR-15 or several months worth of storage food for \$800 than a radio." I suggested, "If there was a catastrophic event, and you really needed to communicate, wouldn't it seem silly to have not spent the extra \$400 on a really decent radio?"

What do you think? Is my analysis a little too simplistic perhaps? Are amateur radio manufacturers ignoring a potential market?

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Dan, KB6NU, is the author of the "No Nonsense" amateur radio license study guides, and blogs about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. You can contact him by e-mailing [cwgeek@kb6nu.com](mailto:cwgeek@kb6nu.com).



I don't think this meets the code for earth grounding.

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### 2017 Club Dues

Please remember to renew your M.A.R.C. membership this month at the club meeting. The dues are still \$ 18.00 per year. See Marlys, KD9BHM at the Saturday club meeting and she can help you with renewing your membership or start your membership with the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club.

## From the Editor's Desk:

The Spark Gap is the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club newsletter. I want to make the newsletter as MARC orientated as possible. I like to include pictures of members as well as friends to the club working their equipment at events and/or at home. Please feel free to send me any pictures you may have operating at a remote location, new equipment that you want all to see, family and friends involved with HAM RADIO or anything that you may feel that other members would like to see.

I would like to include any Amateur Radio related items that you would like to buy sell or trade in the Spark Gap each month. You may also might be looking for a certain piece of equipment that some might be willing to sell you for use in your shack.

If you have an article that you would like to include in the Spark Gap please send to me and I will make sure that it is in the next issue.

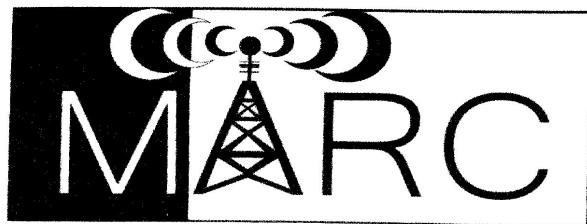
Thanks to all who are readers of the Spark Gap club members and those that live out of the Johnson County area but like HAM RADIO as much as we all do.

This is a great hobby that you can take along with you when you travel, help with communications when there is a disaster or emergency and most of all have fun.

Everyone have a wonderful holiday season!

73,

Bob N9SIU  
Editor



# UP – COMING ACTIVITIES AND HAMFESTS

**12/17/2016 0800 – MARC Monthly club meeting and Christmas Pitch-in Breakfast at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**01/21/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**02/18/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**03/18/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**04/15/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**05/20/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**05/19, 20 &21/2017 – Dayton HAMVENTION new location  
Green County Fairgrounds and Expo Center, 120 Fairground Rd. Xenia, OH 45385**

**06/10/2017 – White River Fire Department Strawberry Festival TBA**

**06/17/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**

**06/24/2017 – ARRL Field Day, location TBA**

**07/15/2017 – 0800 - MARC Monthly club meeting at the New Location, Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.**



# MID-STATE AMATEUR RADIO CLUB

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club meets the THIRD SATURDAY of each month at the Johnson County REMC 750 International Drive Franklin, IN 46131.

See our website, [www.midstatehams.org](http://www.midstatehams.org), for maps on how to get to our meeting.

Everyone is welcome; you do not have to be a *HAM* to attend our meetings or a member of the club.

**WA9RDF Repeaters:**

146.835/  
146.235 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

**Club Officers:**

President: Jacki Frederick – KI6QOG  
Vice President: Bruce Tisdale -- K9ICP  
Secretary: Rhonda Curtis – WS9H  
Treasurer: Marlys Barr – KD9BHM  
Repeater Trustee - Chris Frederick – KQ9Y

**WA9RDF Repeater:**

443.525/  
448.525 MHz  
(151.4 Hz PL Tone)

**Weekly Net: Sunday evening 7:00 PM ARES/RACES members and ALL RADIO AMATEURS**  
**146.835/146.235 MHz (151.4 Hz PL Tone)**

**The Official Newsletter of the Mid-State Amateur Radio Club**

P.O. Box 836  
Franklin, Indiana  
46131

**Spark Gap Editor: Robert LaGrange N9SIU**

Please send your articles to my email: [n9siu@yahoo.com](mailto:n9siu@yahoo.com) no later than the 3rd of the month

**Please see Marlys Barr KD9BHM at the meeting Saturday if you would like to become a member of our club.**

